6: Tomasic E-4 (1947-1948) 1953 RF1 Great Russia RF1

562 611 [583] *korobka* (chest) of her own. When a girl married, she took her korobka, together with the property given her by her father or brothers, to her new home as a dowry and was allowed to dispose freely of it. At the same time her husband was not responsible for her debts.[10] When a married woman died, if childless, her [428] korobka, as a rule, returned to her mother (matrilineal succession) and only if her mother was not alive, to her father. In some provinces the husband would inherit his wife's property if he lived with her four years or more.[11] If she had children, her property was inherited by both sons and daughters equally.[12]

Matriarchal traits are evident in contemporary folk philosophy and many folk customs in the Bielorussian villages as well as in some parts of the Ukraine. In the oral poetry of these [772] people, for instance, the sun is represented as a female who is wooing the moon, her bridegroom. In some songs of these peasant folk the maidens contend with the male youths in duels and defeat them.[13] Even today in some of these regions it is often the girls who take the initiative in finding their suitors. During harvest festivals, it is the maidens who play the leading part. Traces [583] of the capture of the bridegroom still persist in the folk customs of the Ukraine. In Ukrainian and Bielorussian folk poetry [593] women, especially the mother, play a very significant role, while the place of the father is less outstanding. In popular opinion in this area, the consent of the mother in the marriage of a daughter is considered more important than that of the father.

582 Marriage among the Old-Slavonic peasant folk was endogamous within the village community and perhaps even within the joint household community (*verv, zadruga*)—not unlike in the Croatian zadruga of our days.[14] There was also, apparently, 593 a particularly developed brother-sister attachment as is manifested by brother-sister incest which seems to have taken place occasionally in some Russian regions until recently.[15] There were, therefore, abundant opportunities for emotional attachments in the Old-Slavonic family, since there were no external political, economic, or social pressures that might have disturbed internal equalitarian family relationships. Such relationships have persisted until present times in certain parts of Ukraine:

6: Tomasic E-4 (1947-1948) 1953 RF1 Great Russia RF1

II

The Slavonic soil cultivators, depending upon economic self-sufficiency and cooperative effort in marshy and forest regions, as well as in the steppes, practiced a system of joint-family ownership of land (zadruga system). But when nomadic warriors imposed their rule over the tillers of the soil, the invaders considered the land over which they ruled to be their property and forced the peasants who were settled on it to pay them tribute in grain and other agricultural produce. According to the expanded version of the *Pravda Ruskaya,* for instance, after the death of a *smerd* (peasant) his sons would inherit the land, but if there were no sons the property went to the prince.

It is possible that already at that time some of the Asiatic conquerors occasionally divided and redistributed the land among the peasants according to the changing size of their families, the ability to till it and pay taxes and tithes. This might have been the most expedient way by which the conquerors sought to increase the income from the lands which they controlled. At the same time the peasants that formed a land commune were held jointly responsible by their over-lords for a predetermined amount of tributes, as well as for criminal acts committed on their territory.

The system of joint community responsibility was a well-known practice in the society of steppe nomads. It was especially applied as a means to procure fines and force the payment of debts. In that social system if a wrong-doer was unable to pay a fine, his nearest relatives, and failing them, the whole camp, had to provide it.[10] Therefore when these predatory herdsmen imposed their rule over the farming folk, they might have introduced the principle of joint responsibility as the most expedient way to collect the tributes and to exploit economically the subjected peoples.

It was by such social processes that the non-warlike and stateless society of the Old-Slavonic agricultural folk was incorporated into a military society of power-oriented horsemen of the Eurasian steppes.

6: Tomasic E-4 (1947-1948) 1953 RF1 Great Russia RF1

form an organized opposition; instead they fought among themselves over priority in rank and position (*mestnichestvo*), over estates and crownlands, and over the favors of the Czar.

The lack of unity and struggle for power existed also among the lesser nobility, most of whom obtained their rank not by right of inheritance but by the favor of the Czar or as a reward for their military services. Some of these service nobility were rich in vast possessions, others did not differ much from common peasants in the amount of land they possessed, in standard of living, and in formal education.

Internal squabbles among the landed magnates and the service nobility were weakening the strength of the Czardom in relation to its adversaries. This situation offered a strong argument in favor of the Czar's despotism and at the same time eased the crushing of the opposition in the interest of unlimited power. "If subjects submit not themselves unto their ruler, never shall strife cease in the land," said Ivan the Terrible.[9]

The best way to break the power of the landed aristocracy was by making them economically dependent upon the Czar. This objective was achieved in two ways. One was forceful expropriation, resettlement, imprisonment and assassination of recalcitrant boyars. The other consisted of the increased emphasis on *pomestie* system of conditional land tenure as against *votchina*, or hereditary land property.

According to the pomestie system, which followed Mongol traditions, the crown lands, together with the peasants settled on them, were donated to the holder of an office or of a military rank under the condition of obligatory and loyal service to the Czar, and only as long as the loyal service on the part of the land recipient lasted. The *pomeshchik* was obliged to provide a contingent of soldiers according to the size of his donation. This obligation devolved from father to son. The older sons would obtain from the Czar new pomesties and the youngest son would, as a rule, inherit the pomestie of his father.[10] In the Byzantine Empire, too, the land was given in reward for service, but there the land became hereditary property that could be disposed of at will by the holder. In Russia the system of conditional land ownership meant, like in the Mongol political system, complete

6: Tomasic E-4 (1947-1948) 1953 RF1 Great Russia RF1

Psychological instrument at the disposal of the father in imposing

discipline on his son consisted of threat of disinheritance and banishment. If an unmarried son left the paternal house during the lifetime of his father to establish his own separate household, the father was not obliged to give him anything and might even let him go "with nothing but his cross" (*s odnim krestom*).[8] But if a married son left with his father's consent, it was the privilege of the father to determine what his share should be.[9] Also in his testamentary disposition, the father was entitled to dispose of family property at will. The father also had the right to disinherit his son and chase him away from home as a punishment for bad behavior, especially disobedience.[10] He also had the power to select the disobedient son for military conscription. According to some sources the father had the right to sell his son "four times."[11] He might show predilection in testamentary disposition.[12] Many tales tell of a father's favoritism toward an obedient son.[13]

But the way the father used most often to impose his will and assert his power was coercion (*prinuzhdenie*) by means of physical beating (*poboi*). The horse whip and the birch rod (*rozga*) were used freely in family relations. The *Domostroy*, a code of Great-Russian family practices and ethics of the urban strata compiled and edited in the sixteenth century by Priest Sylvester, a councillor and confessor of Ivan the Terrible, prescribes in detail the application of corporal punishment as a sanction of the father's authority and rule:

> Beat your son in his youth, and he will comfort you in your old age . . . And do not weaken in beating the child. Beating with a rod will not kill him, but will make him healthier . . . If you will be weak in his childhood, he will make you suffer when he grows up . . . And give him no power in youth but crush his ribs while he is growing, because when he is big he will not obey you, and you will feel annoyed and ill at heart, and your house will be ruined . . . and your enemies will rejoice at your misfortune.[14]

The popular philosophy of life as expressed in the Great-Russian folk proverbs approves of the teachings of the Domostroy. "If God gives you sons, don't be lazy, teach them and beat them"; "If he did not obey his father, he will obey the whip,"

6: Tomasic E-4 (1947-1948) 1953 RF1 Great Russia RF1

Familycentrism, family isolation, and lack of trust in one's
592 neighbor were apparently projected into the supernatural world
771 where one's own Domovoy, though at times arbitrary, ill-tem-
776 pered and spiteful, was generally considered to be benevolent—bringing good luck to the household which was under his care and solicitude. The neighbor's Domovoy, on the other hand, was always a malevolent and wicked being who could never be propitiated and who was likely to steal your hay or drive away your cattle for the benefit of the home which was under his protection.
[789] The Russian peasants, therefore, developed means of defense against the neighbor's Domovoy in the form of spells and exorcisms.

156 Lack of social trust is not favorable to the development of
621 solidarity within a community. Therefore lack of group identi-
578 fication among the peasants and burghers, the same as the lack of the *esprit de corps* among the nobility, contributed to the perpetuation of the autocratic rule. Lack of communal identifications was an obstacle to the turning of group hostilities against the ruling classes. In such circumstances a great deal of personal aggressiveness had to find outlets and targets within the local community and within the family circle itself. Only when the authorities suffered crushing defeat and loss of prestige the hostilities would turn against them and mass uprisings would take place, demanding re-establishment of old communal values.

With the ascendancy of the otsovskaya system, family relations came to be organized in a hierarchical system along the lines of paternity, marriage status, seniority and sex. At one time, only married male members formed the family council (soviet). The males had priority over the females. Within each sex category the elder had priority rights over the younger. When the family was partitioned, custom demanded that the older brothers leave
• [428] the ancestral home while the youngest, following Mongol traditions, remained on the paternal *koren* (root).[4] In marrying the
[582] daughters it was the eldest who had to be married first.

593 In the patriarchal family, in their relations to the father, all family members were expected to accept his rule with fear and awe (*strakh*) and with humility (*smirenie*). They had to show absolute submission and blind obedience (*besprekoslovnoe povinovenie*),[5] as well as love and gratitude (*blagodarnost*).[6]